such compensation. In forfeiting her rights of inheritance, a woman secures for herself and her children the continuous support of her kin-group and the protection of her rights. This support was denied in the few cases I was able to collect in which the woman demanded her share of inheritance. The following is one of these cases. The material presented is a summary of the life history of Fatma, who at the time of the study, was a shopkeeper managing the small general store she owned near the railroad station of Burg el-Arab, some fifty miles west of Alexandria. She also practiced healing and midwifery on a part-time basis.

Fatma was the only daughter with four sons of sheikh El-Asi, who at one time was the aqila of bait Hussein of the Sanagrah tribal segment in the area. He was also known as a mardi and was frequently sought in mediation of disputes. He was believed to have supernatural power which he used to cure people for a certain amount of money. During his lifetime, he had acquired a sizable sum of money which he invested in livestock. At the time of his death his herd, which numbered more than 900 sheep and goats, was considered the finest in the area. He had no barley lands because his camp was deep in the desert, but he had fine grazing land.

Throughout the area the four sons were known for being arrogant and irresponsible. Three of them were employed by one of the irrigation projects carried on by the government in the area as construction workers; the fourth looked after the herd of his father. All four were known as chasers of women, and they frequently went to Alexandria to visit prostitutes and drink liquor.

Fatma was first married when she was eighteen to a man from Alexandria who had opened a general store in the area where her father

159 lived. Five years ago the husband died in a mining accident leaving
562 Fatma with a ten-month-old boy. By that time, her father had been dis-
428 abled, and her brothers wanted to manage her husband's store on her be-
593 half. Knowing that her brothers were greedy, she refused and insisted
444 that she take care of the store herself. The brothers objected on the
grounds that it was not customary for a decent woman to be exposed to
the customers in the store. When she insisted, the brothers threatened
her. When the threats did not work, they beat her. After that, she
[625] went to the police station in the area, filed a complaint against her
brothers, and asked for police protection. The police officer in charge
brought the brothers in and warned them that if they interfered with the
store, not only would he arrest them, but he would also use his influ-
ence to get them forced from the irrigation projects where three of them
worked. The threat worked, and they became friendly with their sister,
buying things for the store whenever they went to Alexandria and some-
times helping in the store with her consent when she was on housecalls
as a midwife. A year later Fatma was married for the second time to a
159 distant cousin; a few months later her father died. In a family meeting
562 that followed the funeral, Fatma made her announcement that she was claim-
428 ing her share of her father's herd. The brothers were angry and tried to
593 beat her. But the older members of the bait who were present at the meet-
233 ing stopped them and told them that Fatma had all the right to claim her
[587] share of the inheritance according to Awlad Ali ways and that there was
nothing that they could do about it. She was characterized in that
[578] meeting as "bint haram" (illegitimate child), an insult used to refer
to those who show selfishness in their kinship obligations. When she
left the camp with her share of the herd, this seemed to have severed

159 the relationship between her and her brothers.
562
428 Following her action and until the time of the study, they had
593 never visited her and she had never visited them. Her husband took
[237] care of the herd; and the arrangement worked out all right until the
159 husband told Fatma one day that he was going to marry a second wife.
562
593 She refused, but he went ahead with the marriage without her consent.
595 He brought the new wife to live with Fatma in the same tin hut in which they were living. He started to pay more attention to the new wife and to neglect Fatma; whenever the latter complained, he beat her. Then, before one of the religious feasts, he sold two of Fatma's sheep and bought his new wife a dress and a silver bracelet. When Fatma objected
[164] and they argued, he hit her with a stick on the head; she was hospitalized for a week with a serious head wound. While in the hospital, she went to her brothers who lived only two miles away, but they refused to
159 come to her assistance. She then went to sheikh Eleva (the aqila of
562 Bait Asabei) and threw herself on him. He met with the husband and con-
594 vinced him to divorce Fatma. He kept forty sheep of Fatma's herd as com-
593
595 pensation for the mahr he had paid her and the marriage expenses, then
586 took his new wife and moved from Fatma's hut. Fatma then returned and
159 managed her financial affairs successfully herself. She managed the
562 store and hired a shepherd to take care of the sheep. At the time of
444 the present study she was respected by almost everybody in the area, in-
[233] cluding members of the local administration. She is known to be reason-
[629] able and of sound opinion, and her store functions as the meeting place
[521] for many of the tribal mi'ads and for casual conversations. She is also considered as a liason between the tribal population in the area and the local government administration, and is respected by both sides.